

VZCZCXRO4126
RR RUEHIK
DE RUEHVI #1478 3241255
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 201255Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3654
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES

UNCLAS VIENNA 001478

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: New Leadership in Vienna Wiesenthal Institute

REF: Vienna 987

[1](#)1. (U) As a result of the dispute between the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute (VWI) and the Vienna Jewish Community (IKG) over access to the IKG's archives, which had triggered the resignation of the VWI leadership in August (reftel), the VWI elected a new board in early November. Law historian Georg Graf is the new Board Chairman; Brigitte Bailer-Galanda from the Documentation Center of the Austrian Resistance Movement stayed on as First Deputy Chairwoman; and IKG President Ariel Muzicant is the new Second Deputy Chairman.

[1](#)2. (U) The new board has settled the issue of access to the IKG archives with a contract that provides IKG control over access to the archives, but generally promises to make "Holocaust-related material" available. The former VWI leadership has heavily criticized the new conditions, arguing that they will make independent research impossible. Due to this, 12 of the VWI advisory board's 15 members have now also resigned, among them renowned international Holocaust experts such as Honorary Board Chairman Jehuda Bauer from the Jerusalem Hebrew University.

Comment

[1](#)3. (SBU) The IKG's protective approach regarding its archives is attributable to fears that internal IKG matters could become public, such as squabbles between the orthodox and reformed wings. There are also sensitivities regarding the material on the role of the IKG in passing on records on Jews in Austria to the National Socialist regime. After the current clash of personalities has ebbed, time will tell how the IKG will implement the agreement on the use of its archives and whether research opportunities at the VWI are seriously affected by a restrictive IKG course. The new leadership consists of capable and dedicated researchers who wanted to enter a compromise and start a new beginning for the VWI.